Sir Real's

UNDERGROUND COMIX CLASSIX

Cerebus #10

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Marshall Rogers - 26(a,letter)
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Comments:

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS

CEREBUS

the aardvark

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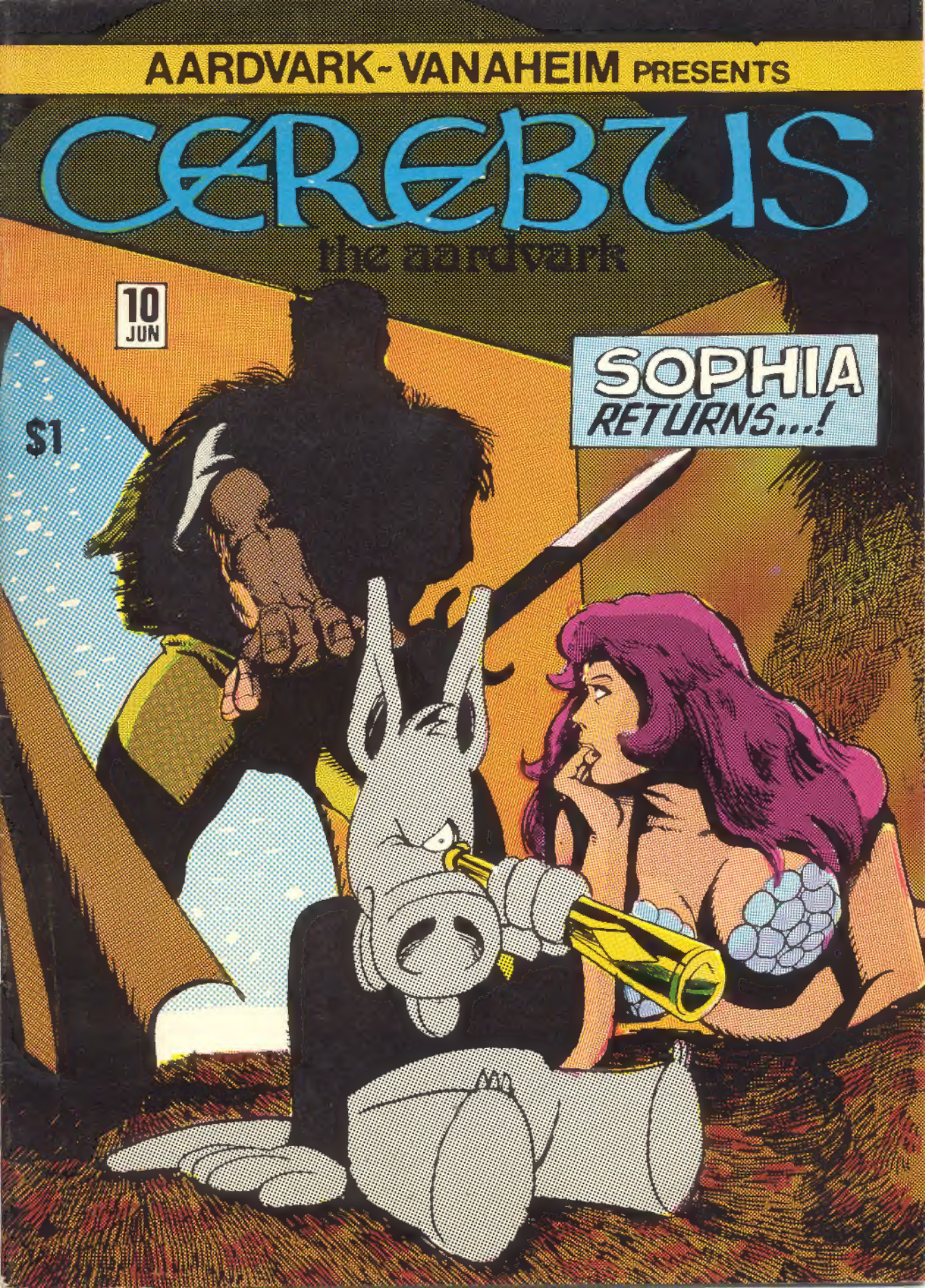
SOPHIA RETURNS...!



CEREBUS

A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

Since the last issue a few things have happened to Dave and I that I feel would be of interest to you.

First of all, we will be at the New York convention this summer along with Phil Seuling's Comic Art Convention in Philadelphia. Details on these cons are on the inside back cover.

Dave will be giving a slide show presentation about Cerebus at both of these two conventions, and at the Atlanta Con on July 27th, 28th and 29th. We both are hoping to talk to as many Cerebus fans as possible, so if you can make it to these cons we'd really like to see you there. Not to mention the fact that any positive support during the slide show would be appreciated greatly.

For myself, one of the largest reasons I'm looking forward to these cons is that I've never been to an American convention. I keep hearing how good they are, how great the fans are. Just writing about it, I can hardly wait to be there.

If you read the letters page you'll probably notice that Dave and I had the opportunity to meet Marshall Rogers in Toronto. What else can I say? The guy is super!

That about does it for this issue, except for one thing. I particularly liked the ending to this issue's story (no peeking) so I do recommend you settle down to it, like right now. See you next issue!

Deni

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MERCHANT OF UNSHIB!

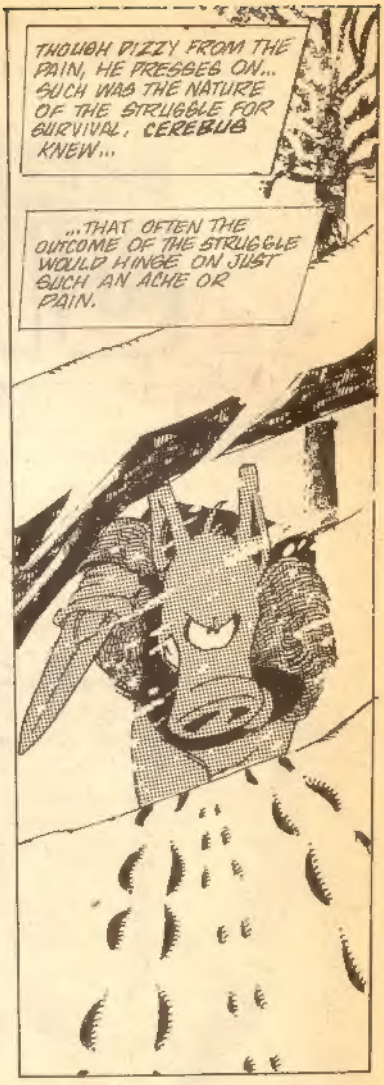
IT IS THE SEVENTH DAY OF THE **BLIZZARD!** SINCE IT HAD STRUCK WITHOUT WARNING A WEEK BEFORE, TRAVEL HAD GROUND TO A HALT AND FIVE HUNDRED PEOPLE HAD DIED OF EXPOSURE IN THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY OF IEST

UNAWARE OF THIS, CEREBUS PUSHES RESOLUTELY SOUTHWARD, ASSURING HIMSELF THAT IEST HAS ESCAPED THE POLAR SNOWS AND FREEZING **WINDS**...

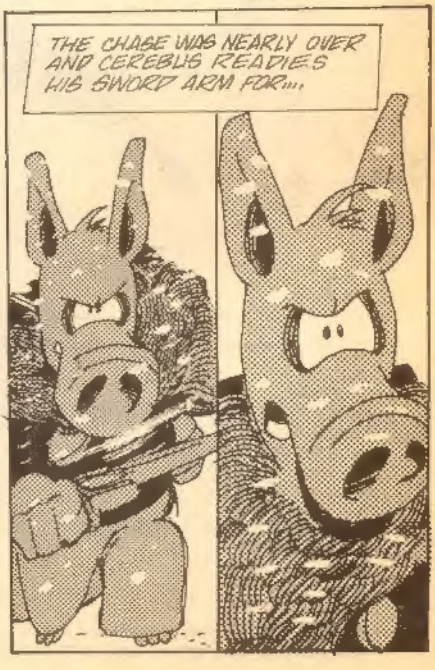
HIS LEGS, PISTON-LIKE, CHURN THE POWDER-WHITE SNOW. THE **FOOTPRINTS** SEEM TO GROW FAINTER WITH EACH PASSING MILE, AND AN EMPTY PACK AND **GROWLING** STOMACH SERVE TO REMIND THE EARTH-PIG OF THE URGENCY OF HIS HUNT...

THERE IS A HANDFUL OF SCRAPS IN THE AARDVARK'S PACK, ENOUGH, HE REALIZES TO SUSTAIN HIM FOR PERHAPS HALF A DAY...
THE SNOW HAD DRIVEN MOST OF THE ANIMALS TO SHELTER. HIS KILLS HAD BECOME MORE INFREQUENT...

CEREBUS WINCES AS HE LOSES HIS FOOTING AND FEELS THE PAINFUL TUG ON HIS RIBS. THE FRACTURES HAD BEGUN TO HEAL, BUT WERE STILL SENSITIVE...

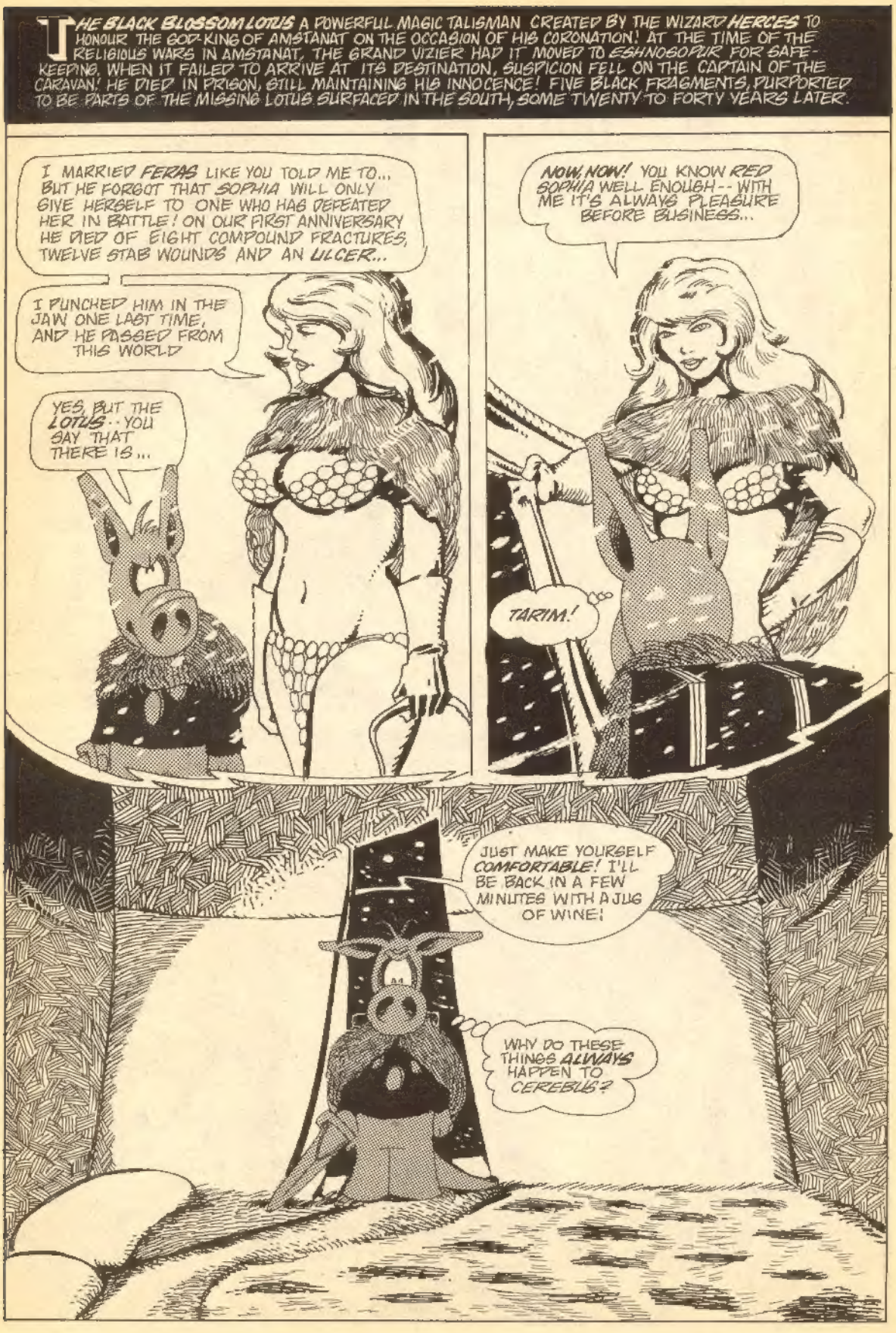

THOUGH DIZZY FROM THE PAIN, HE PRESSES ON... SUCH WAS THE NATURE OF THE STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL, CEREBUS KNEW...
...THAT OFTEN THE OUTCOME OF THE STRUGGLE WOULD HINGE ON JUST SUCH AN ACHE OR PAIN.

THE FOREST OPENS INTO A SMALL CLEARING AND CEREBUS STRAINS IN A LAST-DITCH EFFORT...

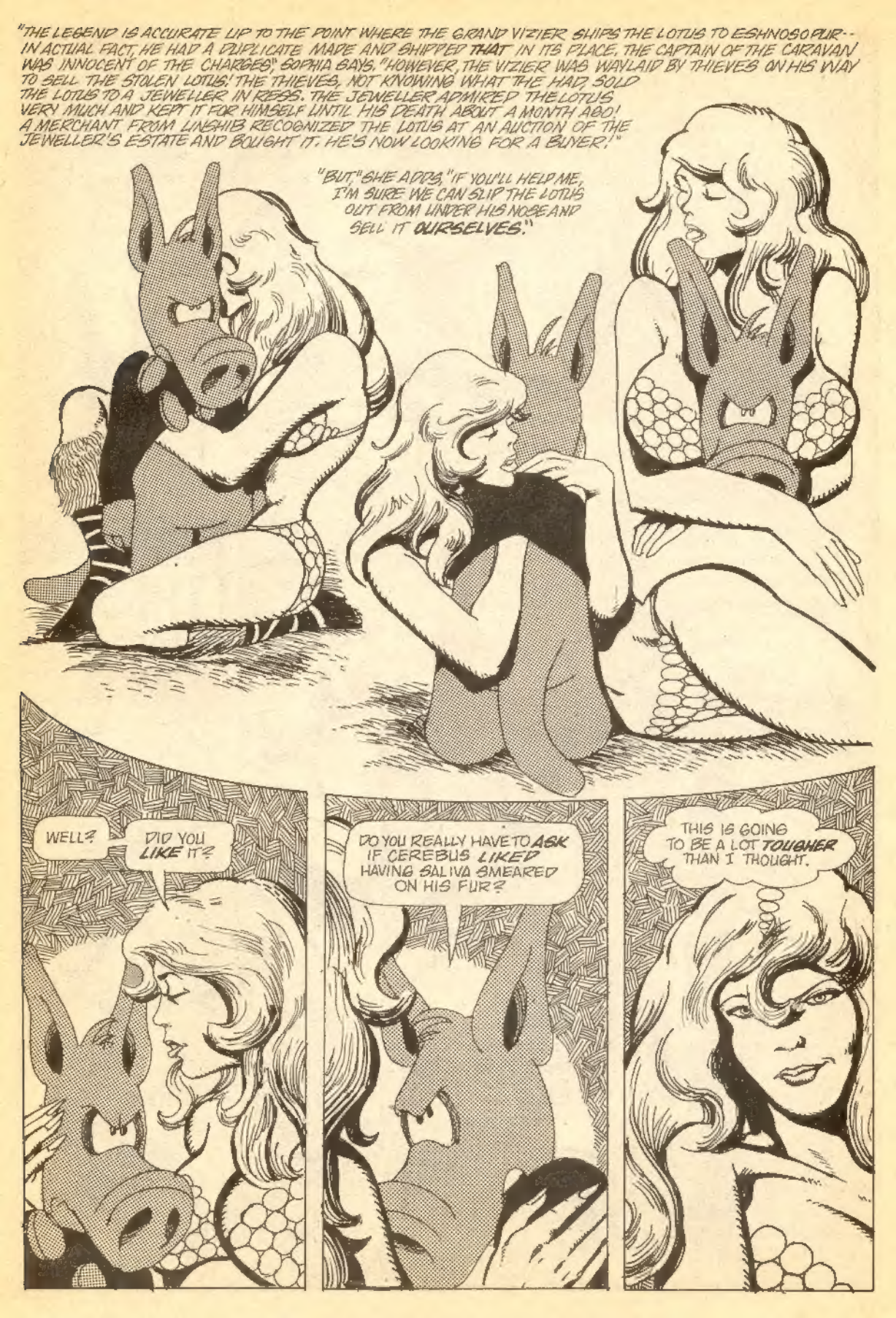

THE CHASE WAS NEARLY OVER AND CEREBUS READIES HIS SWORD ARM FOR...

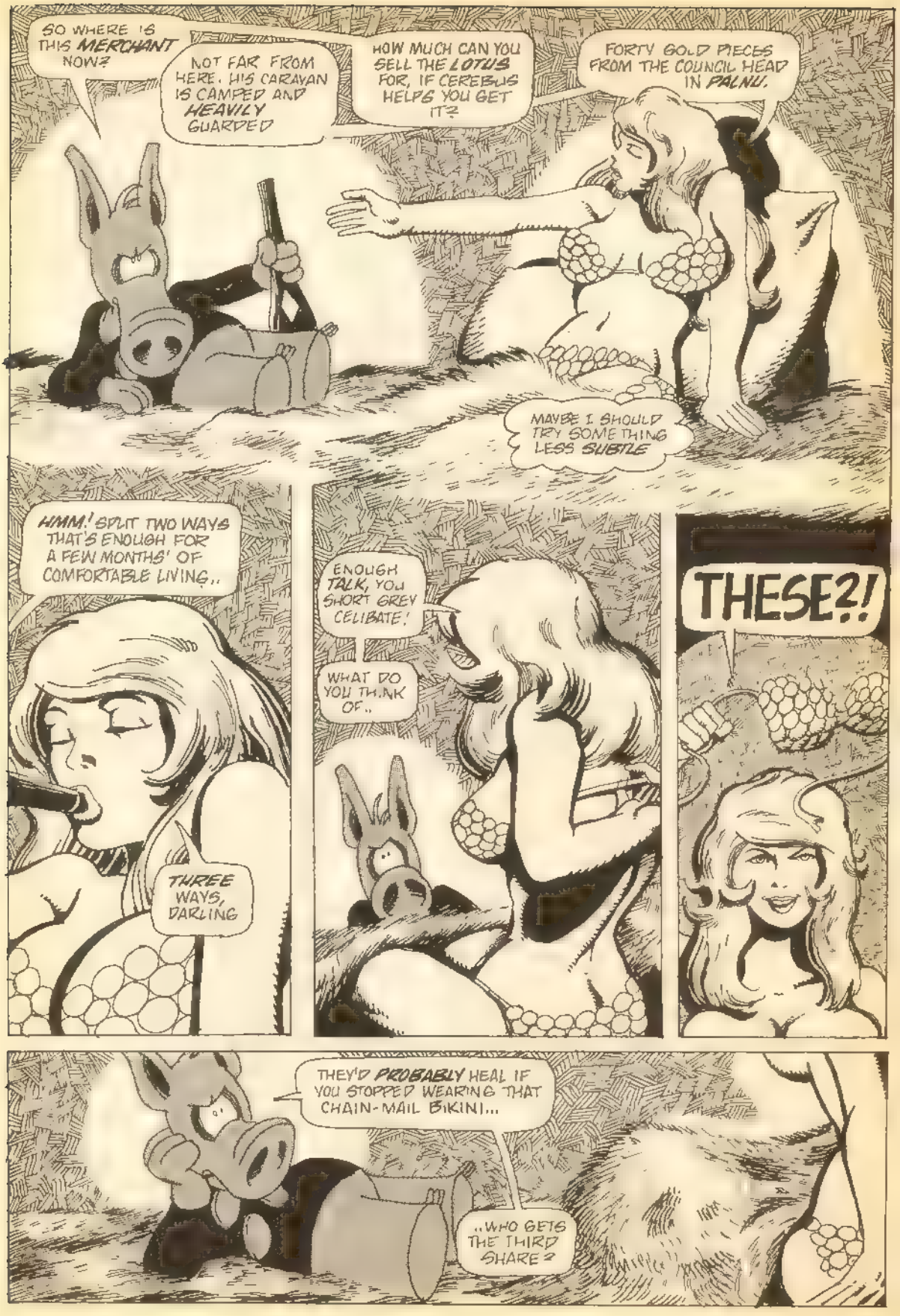
IT WAS GONE. A SMEAR OF BLOOD MARKS THE TERMINATION OF ITS FOOTPRINTS. CEREBUS STOPS, BREATHING HARD...
HIS RIBS ACHE ABOMINABLY WITH EACH BREATH. AS HE SCANS THE CLEARING FOR SOME CLUE AS TO THE...
COOCHY-COOCHY-KOO!
AAAK!
SURPRISED YOU, EH? I WAS JUST OUT FOR A STROLL IN THE SNOW AND THIS FINE JACKRABBIT CAME HOPPING BY -- YOU LOOK TERRIBLE! HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN SINCE YOU'VE EATEN?
I COULD FEEL YOUR RIBS RIGHT THROUGH YOUR SHIRT!
CEREBUS-IS-NOT-GOING-TO FAINT...
ACTUALLY, I'M GLAD I RAN INTO YOU THIS WAY -- I'VE GOT SOMETHING TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT...
HOWZABOUT I FRY UP A QUICK BATCH OF BUNNY BURGERS AND THEN WE CAN...
CEREBUS HAS NO ...INTEREST IN SUCH SMALL GAME.

GREAT-- THEN WE'LL JUST GO TO MY TENT AND TALK...
CEREBUS HAS NOTHING TO SAY TO YOU...
UNFORTUNATE, BUT-- SOPHIA HAS SOMETHING TO SAY TO YOU!
uh-- DOES THE BLACK BLOSSOM LOTUS MEAN ANYTHING TO YOU?
SO YOU FOUND A FRAGMENT, EH? CEREBUS IS NOT IMPRESSED.
BESIDES-- THERE HASN'T BEEN AN AUTHENTIC FRAGMENT DISCOVERED IN NEARLY FIFTY YEARS...
THE ONE I HAVE MY EYE ON ISN'T A FRAGMENT, DEAR HEART...
IT'S INTACT.
MY TENT IS THIS WAY...
BUNNY BURGERS ...
YECH!

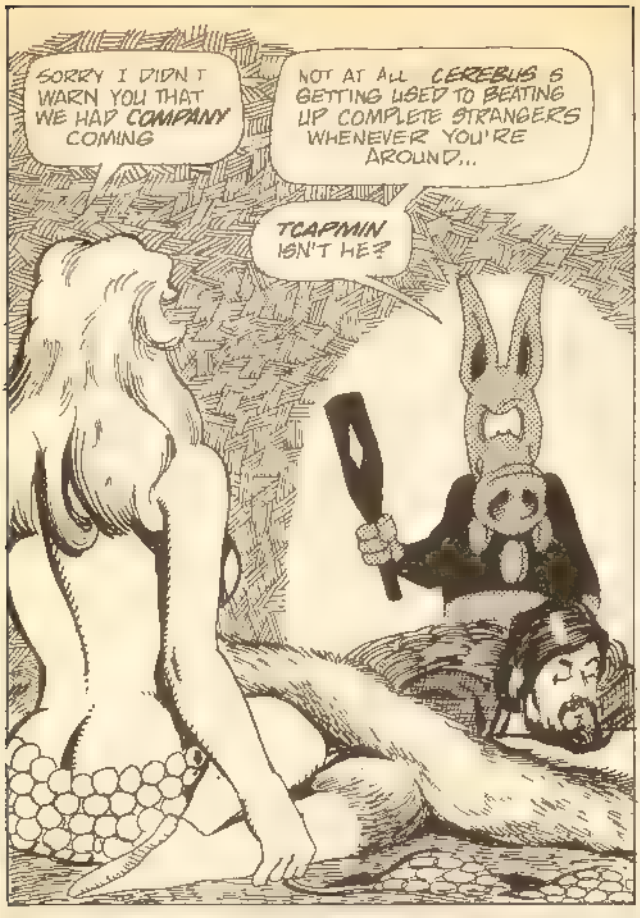

THE BLACK BLOSSOM LOTUS A POWERFUL MAGIC TALISMAN CREATED BY THE WIZARD HERCES TO HONOUR THE GOD-KING OF AMSTANAT ON THE OCCASION OF HIS CORONATION! AT THE TIME OF THE RELIGIOUS WARS IN AMSTANAT, THE GRAND VIZIER HAD IT MOVED TO ESHNOSOPUR FOR SAFE-KEEPING. WHEN IT FAILED TO ARRIVE AT ITS DESTINATION, SUSPICION FELL ON THE CAPTAIN OF THE CARAVAN! HE DIED IN PRISON, STILL MAINTAINING HIS INNOCENCE! FIVE BLACK FRAGMENTS, PURPORTED TO BE PARTS OF THE MISSING LOTUS SURFACED IN THE SOUTH, SOME TWENTY TO FORTY YEARS LATER.
I MARRIED FERAS LIKE YOU TOLD ME TO... BUT HE FORGOT THAT SOPHIA WILL ONLY GIVE HERSELF TO ONE WHO HAS DEFEATED HER IN BATTLE! ON OUR FIRST ANNIVERSARY HE DIED OF EIGHT COMPOUND FRACTURES, TWELVE STAB WOUNDS AND AN ULCER...
I PUNCHED HIM IN THE JAW ONE LAST TIME, AND HE PASSED FROM THIS WORLD
YES, BUT THE LOTUS.. YOU SAY THAT THERE IS...
NOW, NOW! YOU KNOW RED SOPHIA WELL ENOUGH -- WITH ME IT'S ALWAYS PLEASURE BEFORE BUSINESS...
TARIM!
JUST MAKE YOURSELF COMFORTABLE! I'LL BE BACK IN A FEW MINUTES WITH A JUG OF WINE!
WHY DO THESE THINGS ALWAYS HAPPEN TO CEREBUS?

I'VE BEEN SAVING THIS BOTTLE OF DEHRSION BUBBLY FOR A SPECIAL OCCASION AND THIS IS...
CEREBUS?
UNH!
IN THE LAST WEEK, CEREBUS HAD HIS BACK BLASTED, HIS RIBS FRACTURED AND HIS EMPIRE SLIPPED OUT FROM UNDER HIM BY A BLIMP IN BLACK ARMOUR. HE HASN'T EATEN OR SLEPT SINCE YESTERDAY AND WHAT LITTLE PATIENCE HE HAS IS WEARING QUITE THIN!
NOW! EITHER YOU TELL CEREBUS WHERE TO FIND THE BLACK BLOSSOM LOTUS OR HE'LL...
OOOH--YES! YES! DO IT HARDER, MY DARLING! YOU SWEETHEART, YOU! HOW DID YOU GUESS THAT I'M INTO BEING DOMINATED?
ALL RIGHT! CEREBUS KNOWS WHEN HE'S BEATEN! KEEP THE LOTUS FOR YOURSELF. CEREBUS HAS HAD IT!
DON'T BE THAT WAY, DARLING--I'LL TELL YOU ALL ABOUT THE LOTUS--BUT DON'T YOU THINK YOU COULD BE A TEENSY BIT NICER TO ME? IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE I'VE BEEN IN A MAN'S ARMS...
CEREBUS ISN'T A MAN...
CEREBUS IS AN AARDVARK!


"THE LEGEND IS ACCURATE UP TO THE POINT WHERE THE GRAND VIZIER SHIPS THE LOTUS TO ESHNOSO FUR--IN ACTUAL FACT, HE HAD A DUPLICATE MADE AND SHIPPED THAT IN ITS PLACE. THE CAPTAIN OF THE CARAVAN WAS INNOCENT OF THE CHARGES," SOPHIA SAYS. "HOWEVER, THE VIZIER WAS WAYLAID BY THIEVES ON HIS WAY TO SELL THE STOLEN LOTUS! THE THIEVES, NOT KNOWING WHAT THE HAD, SOLD THE LOTUS TO A JEWELLER IN RESS. THE JEWELLER ADMIRED THE LOTUS VERY MUCH AND KEPT IT FOR HIMSELF UNTIL HIS DEATH ABOUT A MONTH AGO! A MERCHANT FROM LINSHIB RECOGNIZED THE LOTUS AT AN AUCTION OF THE JEWELLER'S ESTATE AND BOUGHT IT. HE'S NOW LOOKING FOR A BUYER!"
"BUT," SHE ADDS, "IF YOU'LL HELP ME, I'M SURE WE CAN SLIP THE LOTUS OUT FROM UNDER HIS NOSE AND SELL IT OURSELVES."
WELL?
DID YOU LIKE IT?
DO YOU REALLY HAVE TO ASK IF CEREBUS LIKED HAVING SALIVA SMEARED ON HIS FUR?
THIS IS GOING TO BE A LOT TOUGHER THAN I THOUGHT.


SO WHERE IS THIS MERCHANT NOW?
NOT FAR FROM HERE. HIS CARAVAN IS CAMPED AND HEAVILY GUARDED
HOW MUCH CAN YOU SELL THE LOTUS FOR, IF CEREBUS HELPS YOU GET IT?
FORTY GOLD PIECES FROM THE COUNCIL HEAD IN PALNU.
MAYBE I SHOULD TRY SOMETHING LESS SUBTLE
HMM! SPLIT TWO WAYS THAT'S ENOUGH FOR A FEW MONTHS' OF COMFORTABLE LIVING..
THREE WAYS, DARLING
ENOUGH TALK, YOU SHORT GREY CELIBATE!
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF..
THESE?!
THEY'D PROBABLY HEAL IF YOU STOPPED WEARING THAT CHAIN-MAIL BIKINI...
..WHO GETS THE THIRD SHARE?

WHAT TREACHERY IS THIS, THEN?
A SCUM-SUCKING SAWED-OFF KHAIVEN! YOU CAN'T TAKE OVER OUR COUNTRY BY FORCE, SO YOU HOUND US IN OTHER LANDS!
CEREBUS- THIS IS MEIRGEN HE GETS THE THIRD SHARE.
MEIRGEN SAY HELLO TO CEREBUS THE AARDVARK...
I'LL FEED YOUR HEART TO THE WOLVES, YOU STINKING KHAIVEN SCUM!
AND YOU, SOPHIA - SENDING MEIRGEN OUT TO CHECK THE CARAVAN -- WHILE YOU... LINGER... HERE WITH THAT -- THAT SCUM-SUCKING...
...SAWED-OFF KHAIVEN. I HEARD YOU THE FIRST TIME.
SMAT


SORRY I DIDN'T WARN YOU THAT WE HAD COMPANY COMING
NOT AT ALL CEREBUS IS GETTING USED TO BEATING UP COMPLETE STRANGERS WHENEVER YOU'RE AROUND...
TCAPMIN ISN'T HE?

YOU HAVE A KEEN EYE FOR CRAZIES! HE'S THE SON OF THE JEWELLER I TOLD YOU ABOUT. WHEN THE MERCHANT BOUGHT HIS LATE FATHER'S LOTUS HE GOT SUSPICIOUS. DECIDED TO FIND OUT WHAT HE HAD SOLD
I PROMISED HIM "SPECIAL FAVOURS" IF HE SPLIT THE PROFITS WITH ME...

CEREBUS THOUGHT YOUR "SPECIAL FAVOURS" WERE ONLY FOR THOSE WHO DEFEATED YOU IN BATTLE.

YOU'RE NOT LISTENING! -- I SAID THAT I PROMISED HIM "SPECIAL FAVOURS"
I SAID NOTHING ABOUT ACTUALLY, uh, "FAVOURING" HIM...

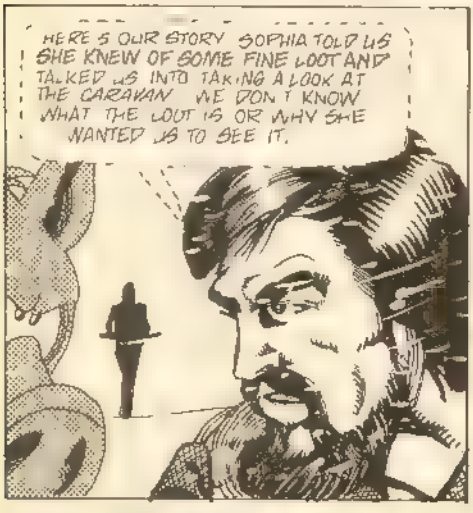
DO YOU WANT CEREBUS TO REVIVE HIM?
MMM. BETTER LEAVE THAT TO ME..
HE'S APT TO BE A BIT TESTY WHEN HE WAKES UP!

MEIRGEN! OH THANK THE GODS YOU STILL LIVE!
SOMEONE HIT ME WITH A =UMPH=
SOPHIA WOULD NEVER HAVE FORGIVEN HERSELF IF YOUR ADORABLE BRAINS HAD GOTTEN PERMANENTLY SCRAMBLED!
YOU REALLY ARE THE CA-UTEST THING SOPHIA FEELS SAFER JUST HAVING YOU NEAR...
CEREBUS WAS HAPPIER WHEN IT WAS ONLY SNOWING OUTSIDE...
NOW THAT YOU'RE FEELING BETTER, I HAVE A TEENSY-WEENSY FAVOUR TO ASK... YOU WOULDN'T MIND IF WE LEFT CEREBUS BEHIND, WOULD YOU SUGAR BLOSSOM?
UHH?
OH, I GET IT, NOW-- YOU'RE GETTING ME CONFUSED SO I'LL DO WHAT YOU WANT!
WELL, NOBODY PULLS THE WOOL OVER THE EYES OF MEIRGEN OF REGS..
...CEREBUS GOES WITH JS AND I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ANY MORE ABOUT IT.

AN HOUR LATER
LOOKS LIKE THE MERCHANT IS MAKING SURE HE KEEPS HIS PRIZE
TCAPMIN BORDER GUARDS! THOSE ARE TWENTY-YEAR DECORATIONS* ON THEIR SHOULDERS, TOO... MUST HAVE COST HIM A FORTUNE.
*SIGNIFYING TWENTY YEARS OF SERVICE MANNING THE WALL OF TSI AGAINST INVASION FROM KHAIDOGE THE UNGOVERNABLE.

YOU MAY GET A FEW MONTH'S PLEASURE OUT OF FORTY GOLD PIECES' IN TCAPMIN ONE COULD LIVE FOR THREE YEARS AS A KING!
THOSE GUARDS COULD BE HAD FOR A HANDFUL OF SILVER COINS.

BUT, IF THEIR JOB IS TO KEEP THE LOTUS SAFE, NEITHER MAN NOR GOD COULD WREST IT FROM THEM.
HOLD!


HERE'S OUR STORY SOPHIA TOLD US SHE KNEW OF SOME FINE LOOT AND TALKED US INTO TAKING A LOOK AT THE CARAVAN. WE DON'T KNOW WHAT THE LOOT IS OR WHY SHE WANTED US TO SEE IT.

THE TCAPMIN GUARDS WILL BE MORE INTERESTED IN A WOMAN, ANYWAY, SO, HE'LL PROBABLY LET YOU AND ME GO...
TARIM.

WHAT BUSINESS HAVE YOU HERE?

DIDN'T YOU KNOW?
WE'RE HERE TO STEAL THE BLACK BLOSSOM LOTUS!

WELL, I GUESS NOW I HAVE TO BRIBE YOU. JOIN US AND WE'LL GIVE YOU A FULL SHARE -- TEN-GOLD-PIECES!
THE GUARD, WHO HAD ALREADY SOLD HIS LOYALTIES FOR EIGHT COPPER COINS, PAUSES AND HIS BROW DEVELOPS DEEP FURROWS.
IT WOULD MEAN LESS MONEY PER SHARE, BUT CEREBUS DID NOT RELISH THE IDEA OF QUARRELING WITH THE TCAPMIN...
THE BORDER GUARDS WERE KNOWN FOR THEIR HAIR-TRIGGER REFLEXES AND TEMPERS...
A SLOW GRIN SPLITS THE FEATURES OF THE GRIM BLONDE NORTHLANDER
TELL ME YOUR PLAN! IF I THINK IT WILL WORK I WILL JOIN
OKAY! THIS IS OUR ONLY CHANCE TO KEEP A SHARE OF THE LOTUS! MAKE IT A GOOD PLAN ..
CEREBUS THOUGHT YOU HAD A PLAN!
I HAD PLANNED TO TAKE THE GUARDS BY SURPRISE AND OVERPOWER THEM WHILE THEY SLEPT...
SOMEHOW I DON'T THINK HE'LL HAVE TOO MUCH FAITH IN THAT IDEA..
WELL?
LET'S HEAR YOUR DAMN PLAN!

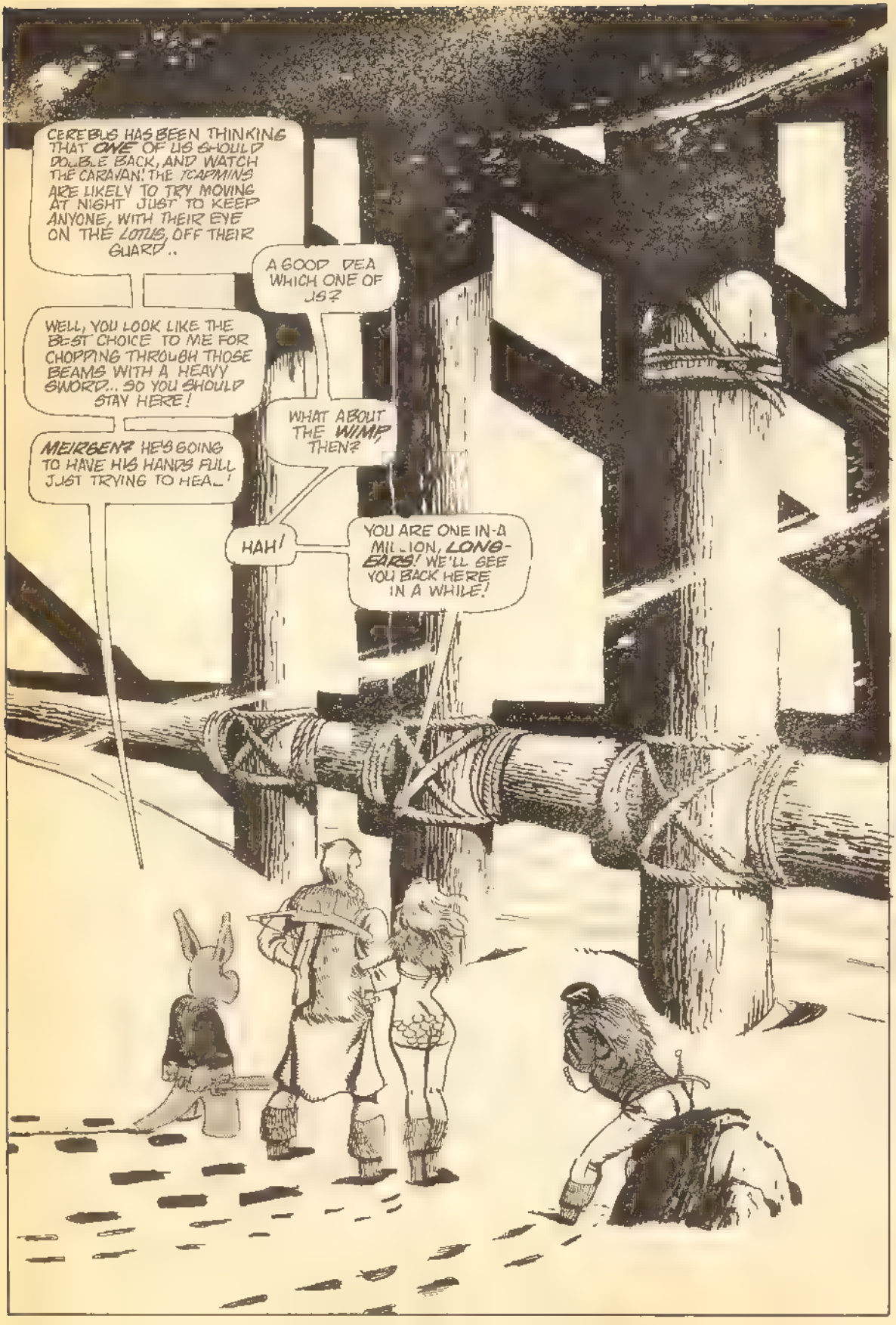
CEREBUS RISES SLOWLY-- HIS EYES FIXED ON THE TCAPMIN'S! HIS MIND RACES, SIFTING THROUGH ALL HE KNOWS OF THE BORDER GUARDS, THE CROSSBOW FOLLOWS HIS RISE..
..THE POINT OF ITS ARROW AIMED DIRECTLY AT THE EARTH-PIG'S CHEST..
JUST DON'T MAKE HIM ANGRY...
CEREBUS WILL DO HIS BEST.
WHEN THEY ARE ALL ON ONE BRIDGE, WE PLAN TO RIP OUT A FEW STRUCTURAL SUPPORTS...
..AND PICK THE LOTUS OUT OF THE RUBBLE THAT LANDS AT THE BOTTOM
THE TCAPMIN GUARDS ARE DEFENDERS! IN TRANSIT, THEY DEPEND EACH OTHER! IT IS SAID TO TAKE A BOLT OF LIGHTNING TO MAKE THEM BREAK RANKS
WE BOTH KNOW ALL THAT.
MEIRGEN AND SOPHIA AWAIT THE VERDICT WITH BATED BREATH...
PLEASE! KILL HIM, BUT LET ME GO! OH-PLEASE-PLEASE!
BUT- IT MEANS THEY WILL BE CROSSING BRIDGES AS A UNIT!
HAHARHAHAHAR! LONG-EARS-- I LIKE YOUR STYLE!
YOU'VE GOT A NEW RECRUIT!

HOWEVER, I THINK THAT WE SHOULD GET SOME BUSINESS OUT OF THE WAY, FIRST.
SINCE THIS CROSSBOW MAKES ME THE MOST IMPORTANT MEMBER OF THE GROUP, I THINK I SHOULD GET TWO SHARES - TWENTY GOLD PIECES.
BUT THE LOTUS WAS MY FATHER'S, AND YOU'RE ALLOWING LESS THAN SEVEN GOLD PIECES FOR EACH OF US! THAT'S COMPLETELY UNACCEPTABLE!
SOPHIA COULD MAKE MORE THAN THAT SELLING HER OLD CHAIN MAIL BIKINIS TO PERVERTS IN IEST..
IF YOU PREFER I CAN CALL OUT FOR SOME ASSISTANCE ...
AND YOU'LL BE DEAD WHERE YOU STAND!
CEREBUS IS GETTING TIRED OF SAYING THIS..
. BUT HE KNOWS WHEN HE'S BEATEN
LET'S GO FIND A BRIDGE.
AMAZING HOW SOME THINGS ONLY MAKE SENSE WHEN YOU HAVE SOMEONE EXPLAIN THEM TO YOU.
ISN'T IT THOUGH?

CEREBUS CAN'T BELIEVE IT! WE'VE BEEN WALKING FOR AN HOUR-- IT'S ALMOST DUSK..
THE BRIDGE IS JUST AHEAD.
AND NO INCIDENTS SO FAR
ALL THIS TIME I'VE JUST BEEN WAITING FOR THE TCAPMIN TO SAY...
WAIT A MINUTE! I JUST HAD ANOTHER THOUGHT..
TWO IN ONE DAY? BEGINNER'S LUCK.
I THINK, AS LEADER OF THIS GROUP, THAT I'M ENTITLED TO SOME FRINGE BENEFITS.
LIKE SOPHIA HERE! I COULD SHARE SOME OF MY GOLD WITH HER AND... WHO KNOWS? WE MAY FIND SOMETHING SHE CAN DO FOR ME!
THAT IS, UNLESS EITHER OF YOU TWO...OBJECTS?
NOT AT ALL
NOW, CAN WE JUST GET TO THE..
HE DIDN'T JUST ASK YOU, CEREBUS...
...HE ASKED BOTH OF US.

ARE YOU CRAZY OR JUST PLAIN STUPID? HE'S A TWENTY-YEAR-MAN! CEREBUS COULD UNDERSTAND IF YOUR LIFE DEPENDED ON...
CEREBUS -- A MAN HAS TO DO WHAT A MAN HAS TO DO --
THAT'S VERY GOOD! DID SOMEONE MAKE IT UP FOR YOU OR ARE YOU JUST CLEVER WITH WORDS?
AND RIGHT NOW WHAT I HAVE TO DO IS...
GET YOUR FACE PUNCHED?
NO, NO NO..
WHAT I WAS ABOUT TO SAY WAS
RIGHT NOW, WHAT I HAVE TO DO IS...

...GET YOUR RIBS KICKED?
JUST... ONE.... MORE TRY...
I THINK I M.... GETT NG THE HANG OF IT.
.. TE.L YOU WHAT...
HOW ABOUT YOU GET SOPHIA TODAY. . AND I GET HER TOMORROW!
HOW ABOUT YOU DRAG YOUR BLOODY CARCASS AWAY FROM HERE...
...BEFORE I VENTILATE YOUR WINDPIPE. HMM?
NEVER LET IT BE SAID THAT MEIRGEN OF RESS TURNED DOWN A COMPROMISE...

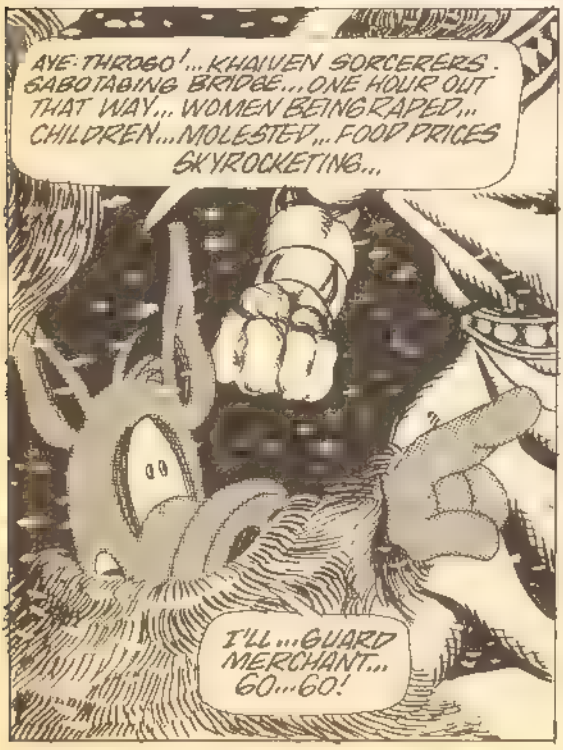

CEREBUS HAS BEEN THINKING THAT ONE OF US SHOULD DOUBLE BACK, AND WATCH THE CARAVAN! THE TCAPMINS ARE LIKELY TO TRY MOVING AT NIGHT JUST TO KEEP ANYONE, WITH THEIR EYE ON THE LOTUS, OFF THEIR GUARD..
A GOOD IDEA WHICH ONE OF US?
WELL, YOU LOOK LIKE THE BEST CHOICE TO ME FOR CHOPPING THROUGH THOSE BEAMS WITH A HEAVY SWORD.. SO YOU SHOULD STAY HERE!
WHAT ABOUT THE WIMP, THEN?
MEIRGEN? HE'S GOING TO HAVE HIS HANDS FULL JUST TRYING TO HEA..!
HAH!
YOU ARE ONE IN A MILLION, LONG-EARS! WE'LL SEE YOU BACK HERE IN A WHILE!

CEREBUS WOULD LIKE TO BORROW YOUR FUR -- IT IS GOING TO BE COLD TONIGHT AND HE CAN USE IT FOR A TENT...
HA! A TENT! DID YOU HEAR THAT, SOPHIA? HE WANTS TO USE MY FUR FOR A TENT! YOU SURE HAVE SOME FUNNY FRIENDS...
CEREBUS? OH YES HE'S A LALOH-A MINUTE
I GUESS
SOPHIA SMILES AT THE EARTH-PIG IN GRATITUDE. SHE HAD EXPECTED A FIT OF JEALOUS RAGE NOW THAT HE WAS NO LONGER HER TRUE LOVE...
FOR ONCE, THOUGH, SHE HAD ALLIED HERSELF WITH A WINNER! HENROT, FERAS AND ALL THE OTHERS WERE BEHIND HER NOW..
GOOD LUCK, CEREBUS...
BE CAREFUL THEY DON'T SEE YOU...
AND SO, THE EARTH-PIG DEPARTS, LEAVING SOPHIA TO HER DREAMS OF SUNKEN MARBLE BATH TUBS AND MALE ATTENDANTS...
..THE TOADMIN TO HIS DREAMS OF GOLD AND SOPHIA...
...AND MEIRGEN TO HIS DREAMS OF RIBS THAT DIDN'T HURT QUITE SO MUCH!

AN HOUR LATER, IN THE TCAPMIN GUARDS' ENCAMPED CARAVAN
THERE'S ONLY ONE IN THE DECK, YOU OLD BUZZARD AND IT'LL COST YOU TO FIND WHETHER I HAVE IT.
ONE MORE HAND AND THAT WILL BE ALL THE DIAMONDBACK I CAN AFFORD TONIGHT
YOU SAID THAT FOUR HOURS AGO 'N' OUTZ

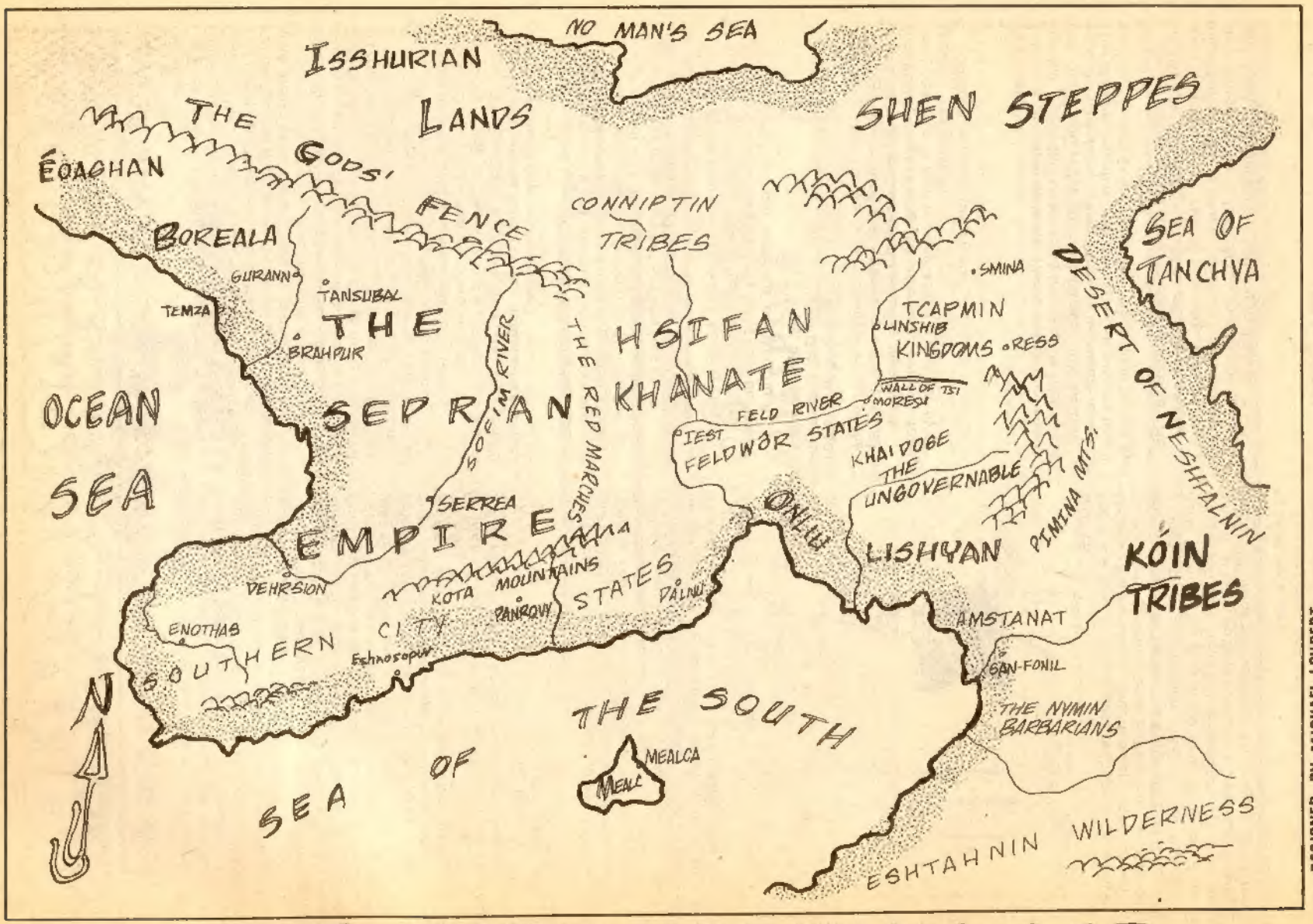
KHAIVEN SORCERERS! ...KHAIVEN SORCERERS!
EH?

LOOK--LOOK-- HOW THEY... CHANGED ME!
IT'S THROGO!?


AYE: THROGO!... KHAIVEN SORCERERS. SABOTAGING BRIDGE... ONE HOUR OUT THAT WAY... WOMEN BEING RAPED... CHILDREN... MOLESTED... FOOD PRICES SKYROCKETING...
I'LL... GUARD MERCHANT... GO... GO!

FOR THROGO!
HUNG! HUNG!
WOMEN RAPED!
FOOD PRICES SKYROCKETING!
CHILDREN MOLESTED!
AVENGE! AVENGE!

HELLO I'M CEREBUS THE AARDVARK. YOU HAVE EXACTLY FOUR SECONDS TO HAND OVER THE BLACK BLOSSOM LOTUS...
AND YOU'VE JUST USED UP THREE OF THEM...
HAVE A NICE TRIP BACK TO UNSHIB
NOW IF CEREBUS COULD ONLY SEE THE LOOK ON THROGO'S FACE WHEN HIS COMRADES SWOOP DOWN ON HIM...
...IT WOULDN'T BE A HALF BAD DAY..



THE AARDUARKIAN AGE

DESIGNED BY MICHAEL LOUBERT

AARDVARK COMMENT

221 QUEEN ST S. #1401 - KITCHENER-ONTARIO N2G 1W5

Dear Dave
I recently bought CEREBUS 1-6 (I hear there are more, but they haven't made it south yet) and read them all in a lump, not the best way to appreciate them. Nonetheless, they clearly improved from 1 to 6. Humor increased steadily (a good thing in a funny animal comic, even a s&s funny animal comic) with a dip at 5, and so did the drawing quality. And Cerebus has mellowed somewhat since 1 and 2 - didn't even pause in No. 4 to remove a few pieces of Elrod before escaping - which is all to the good. (Though falling in love did terrible things to his temper) I'd say that No. 6 is distinctly the best of the lot. Not only is it the funniest, but you even managed some decent pathos - the earth-pig who will never know what he's lost, and the dancer who will. (Denise has a melancholy taste in wedding presents; may your relationship be better-starred!) Doesn't seem that there's room in the Aardvarkian Saga for Jaka, which is a pity; women who can open their hearts to aardvarks are a rare commodity. (I do not include among them a certain nutbar who seemed more interested in opening her thighs.)

On the negative side ... Cerebus's annoying habit of switching between 'I' and 'Cerebus' for no visible reason is most noticable in No. 6 because Jaka does it too. More bothersome, you skimped somewhat on the non-farcical parts of the plot. E.G., who was that guy bleeding at the beginning (I can make guesses) and why was he so anxious to tell his secret (I can't imagine - except to set off the plot, of course)?

Miscellaneous thoughts: Good idea, keeping Cerebus the only animal around. 'Cept in flashbacks, of course; I don't know if it's impossible to give him a past, but I hope so. (Is he 26?) The word 'excellent' contains no A.

Philip Michael Cohen,
726 Golf Course Road,
Aliquippa, Pa. 15001

How about this: The guy was a renegade Priest of the Black Sun and realized that someday the Priest would find the hidden gold and use it for furthering their death-worshipping ways. Giving the word to a complete stranger was preferable to their running across it one day by accident. Fair enough?

*I don't know. **Is he twenty-six?***

Dear Cerebus,
You are a cute little aardvark. Really, you are; whenever I see you, I have this sudden and irrepressible urge to grab you, cuddle you and scratch behind your little aardvark ears, crooning John Denver songs as we watch re-runs of **The Waltons** together. You remind me of a teddy bear I had once named Cutsey Woodles - same little button eyes and all.

But seriously, folks, I really do enjoy CEREBUS THE AARDVARK, snatching up and hoarding each and every issue as it comes out. You do fine work, and you have more than enough reason to be proud. I just thought I'd show Cutsey Woo--er, CEREBUS - that not receiving letters can sometimes be a blessing in disguise. Am I forgiven, you sweet little aardvark, you?

Kent G. Orlando
4336 Prescott Rd.
Nashville, Tenn. 37204

*You'll have to stand in line, fella. If I had a nickel for every person who wanted to grab him, cuddle him, and sing John Denver songs to him, I wouldn't have to draw comic books for a living. **The Waltons** part is a new one on me, though. You must be a sickee.*

Dear Dave and Deni
Cerebus No. 7 was great as ever. But one small complaint. It's probably a great kick for you to get a "professional" contribution for your covers (a la Frank Thorne this issue) but I buy Cerebus for your work. Actually that puts it mildly. Although I respect the man's credentials and the way he spent his own time to promote Red Sonja, I can't help but feel that his work was the stake through Sonja's heart that ended Red's mag. Next time if there's a choice between Frank Thorne's cover and a big blank space, save the ink.

Keep up the good work. I rank Cerebus up there with X-MEN and ELFQUEST as my "must read" favorites.

Ed Boner
819 W. Auburn
Rochester, Mich. 48063

Talk about your schizophrenic response to a letter. The ARTIST Dave Sim wants to have your taste bronzed. The FAN-of-Frank-Thorne Dave Sim would like to punch you out. All kidding aside, I had expected that everyone would be clamoring for me to turn over the covers to Mr. Thorne on a permanent basis. Even those who like Frank Thorne's work, however, expressed a preference for a complete Dave Sim book. It's hard to stay humble, folks.

NOTES
There is a long story that goes with the accompanying Marshall Rogers sketch. Unfortunately, space doesn't permit me to go into it here. Suffice it to say, Marshall (Mr. Rogers is the name of a kiddie show in Canada) made a recent Toronto convention a real buzz for Deni and I. Aside from placing third in the Berni-Wrightson look-alike contest last year, he is also a sweetheart of a guy and I have it on good authority that he knows Neal Adams personally. If the guy who got the Cerebat sketch (you can just picture it, can't you?) is reading this, I am begging you to send me a xerox.

The next issue of Cerebus will be released (if I don't have a nervous breakdown) at the 1979 New York Comic Art Convention. Check the inside back cover for details, and Deni and I hope to see you there.

PHIL SEULING'S

1979 COMIC ART CONVENTION

Sat., June 30, 12 noon - 8:00 p.m.
Sun., July 1, 10 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

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Both Saturday and Sunday will be full rich days. A tight schedule of attractions will keep things lively, and you'll have to make an effort to see the art displays, hear the guests, watch the slide shows, shop for your most-wanted comic books, attend the autograph sessions, applaud the costume parade, meet new friends [who have the same mania you do], get to the next panel on time, and perhaps even find time for a quick lunch!

You can learn more than you ever expected from the forthright talks given by famous writers and artists, almost always with question-and-answer periods afterward, so that you can participate. When you find out how the artists, writers, and editors really feel about working with each other, you'll know you're among familiar friends who are willing to share some experiences.

If you come to buy, you'll find dealers from all over the country gathered into an exotic bazaar of delectable collectibles - not only comic books old and new, but fine artists' original drawings, big little books, comic character toys and games, posters, fanzines, new products, movie and science fiction mementos, bubble gum cards from Superman to Galactica, photos, autographs - more than you can imagine [or afford!]

But you can feel rich just by being there! The priceless prizes that all collectors lust for are right in front of your fascinated eyes. The art you love, whether paintings or black and white line work are there for your inspection. The newest publications, almost wet with fresh printers ink, are being offered by their publishers, often with the artists present to add their autographs.

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Also: An auction each day, of some superb offerings [and some cheesy cheapies, too!]

Also: Contests, awards, and more!

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Please send for further info and Hotel rates to:
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PHIL SEULING'S

COMIC ART CONVENTION IN PHILADELPHIA

Sat., July 14, 12 noon - 8:00 p.m.
Sun., July 15, 10 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Adults $3.00
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Three years ago, a peculiar set of circumstances caused the Comic Art Convention, which had run for nine years in New York City, to look toward Philadelphia for a temporary home. That first Philadelphia experience was such a grand and glorious time that it demanded a repeat performance last year. Now we have a third and even better time planned for July of this year, in what has become a terrific and delightful annual arrangement - the Comic Art Convention in Philadelphia!

Attractions:

Although it is still too early to announce specific details, we can guarantee some of the best times you'll have this summer! Whether you want an autograph from an admired artist, or you like bidding on rare comics material at one of the daily auctions, or you are excited by seeing up close the artwork you loved in comic books or on magazine covers, or you want to expand your comic art knowledge at the panels, talks, slide show lectures, or interviews - **whatever** you like best, a full schedule will offer you a feast!

The best part of all will of course be you, the fans, and the excitement you bring with you. Remember, this is the year you promised to enter the wonderful Costume Parade (cash prizes!) and not just come to watch. Let's participate, gang, and there will be a souvenir gift to **everyone** who enters in costume! (No civilian disguises, wise guy.)

A Blast from the Past:

Those everloving purveyers of rare and beautiful old comic books - the dealers! - will be here from all quarters, ready to exchange their precious material for a mere handful of your gold. You can buy a bargain or go sky-high for that incredibly scarce issue you've always imagined owning. And who can put a price on a dream?

Just being in the same immense room with millions of these treasures will be worth your time at the Convention. Look at 1940's comic books, artists drawings, old comic books, character toys, new or recent comics, games, mementos, premiums, gum cards, science fiction books, movie posters, and try to imagine such a collection of historic and valued material anywhere else! This is the place to be.

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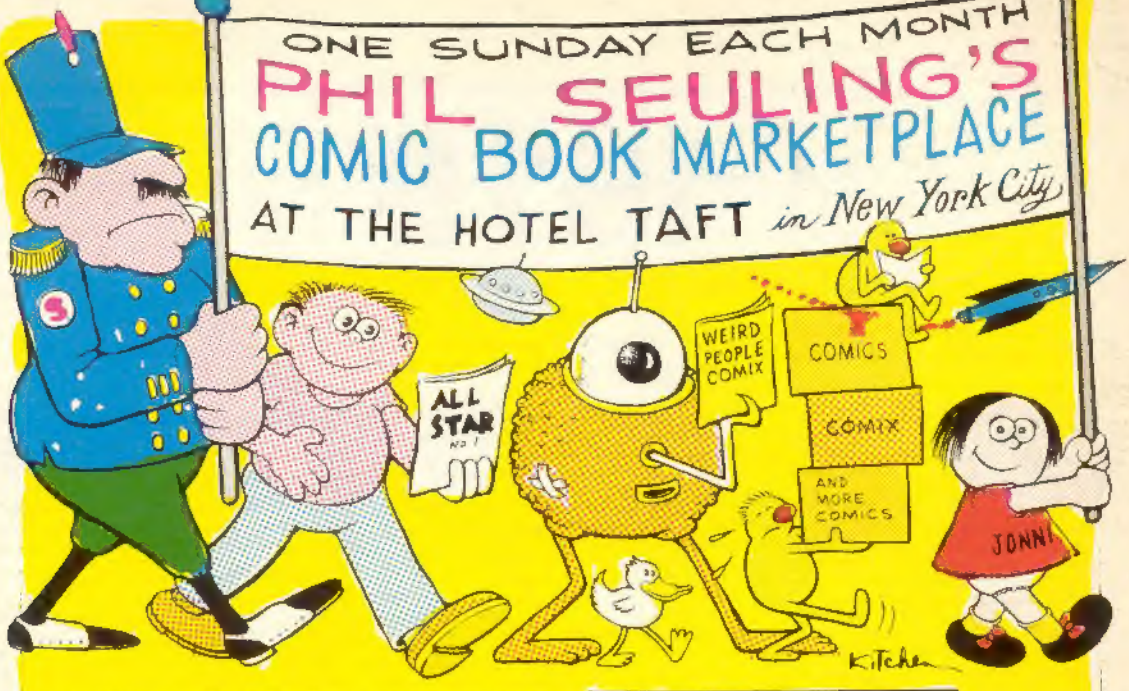

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